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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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THE MILITARY POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

DURING THE
MEXICAN WAR

BY

Bvt. Maj. Gen. EMORY UPTON

United States Army

[Extract from Senate Document No. 494, Sixty-second Congress, Second Session]



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(H. Res. 493.)

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

May 9, 1914.

Resolved, That there be reprinted as a separate document, for the use of the House of Representatives, three thousand copies of chapter fifteen of the military policy of the United States, by General Emory Upton, entitled "The Military Policy of the United States during the Mexican War," being pages one hundred and ninety-five to two hundred and twenty-two, inclusive, of Senate document Numbered Four hundred and ninety-four, Sixty-second Congress, second session; one thousand copies of the same to be distributed through the folding room of the House and two thousand copies through the document room of the House.

Attest:

SOUTH TRIMBLE, *Clerk*.

II

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MAY 25 1914

THE MILITARY POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES DURING THE
MEXICAN WAR.^a

Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, Buena Vista, the siege and capture of Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, and El Molino del Rey contributed an unbroken chain of victories preceding the entrance of our troops into the capital of Mexico.

Successes so brilliant would apparently denote the perfection of military policy, but, paradoxical as it may seem, official documents establish the fact that they were achieved under the very same system of laws and executive orders which in the preceding foreign war had led to a series of disasters culminating in the capture and destruction of our capital.

The explanation of this paradox is to be found partly in the difference of character of our adversaries, but more especially in the quality of the Regular Army with which we began the two wars. For the Mexican war, as for the war of 1812, the Government had ample time to prepare. The admission of Texas into the Union on the 1st of March, 1845, which was ratified by that State on the ensuing 4th of July, was followed in August by the advance of our Army to Corpus Christi.

On the 6th of August the Adjutant-General, by direction of the Secretary of War, wrote to the commander, General Taylor:

Although a state of war with Mexico or an invasion of Texas by her forces may not take place, it is nevertheless deemed proper and necessary that your force should be fully equal to meet with the certainty of success any crisis which may arise in Texas, and which would require you, by force of arms, to carry out the instructions of the Government.^b

He was directed to learn from the authorities of Texas what additional force could, in case of need, be placed at his disposal, and given authority to call them into service, coupled, however, with the economical restriction:

Such auxiliary volunteer force from Texas, when events, not now revealed, may justify their employment, will be organized and mustered under your orders, and be received into the service of the United States when actually required in the field to repel invasion,^c actual or menaced, and not before.

^a Note indorsed upon this chapter in the handwriting of General Sherman was as follows: "I read this before sending to Garfield. I think it very good and suggest no amendment.—W. T. S." And again, in General Garfield's handwriting: "This is very good.—J. A. Garfield."—EDITORS.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 83.

^c House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, pp. 83, 84.

The same paragraph of this order informed the commander that—

It should be understood that as yet no provision exists by law for the payment of such forces, but appropriations for that purpose will doubtless be made by Congress. * * *

The amount and description of the force to be mustered into the service of the United States is left to your determination, and, of course, to be regulated by circumstances.^a

August 23, 1845, the Secretary of War wrote:

The information hitherto received as to the intentions of Mexico and the measures she may adopt, does not enable the Administration here to give you more explicit instructions in regard to your movements than those which have been already forwarded to you. There is reason to believe that Mexico is making efforts to assemble a large army on the frontier of Texas for the purpose of entering the Territory and holding forcible possession of it. Of their movements you are doubtless advised, and we trust have taken, or early will take, prompt and efficient steps to meet and repel any such hostile incursion. Should Mexico assemble a large body of troops on the Rio Grande and cross it with a considerable force, such a movement must be regarded as an invasion of the United States and the commencement of hostilities. You will, of course, use all the authority which has been or may be given you to meet such a state of things. Texas must be protected from hostile invasion, and for that purpose you will of course employ to the utmost extent all the means you possess or can command. * * *

Should Mexico declare war, or commence hostilities by crossing the Rio Grande with a considerable force, you are instructed to lose no time in giving information to the authorities of each or any of the above-mentioned States^b as to the number of volunteers you may want from them respectively. Should you require troops from any of these States, it would be important to have them with the least possible delay. It is not doubted that at least two regiments from New Orleans and one from Mobile could be obtained and expeditiously brought into the field. You will cause it to be known at these places what number and description of troops you desire to receive from them in the contemplated emergency. The authorities of these States will be apprised that you are authorized to receive volunteers from them, and you may calculate that they will promptly join you when it is made known that their services are required.^c

To "meet with the certainty of success" any crisis that might arise in Texas, the commander was given on paper an aggregate of 4,000 men of the Regular Army, with power to call from States, near and remote, such force of volunteers as in his discretion he might judge expedient.

Three days later, August 26, the Secretary of War informed the Governors of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana by letter that General Taylor had been appointed to command the "army of occupation" and requested him to furnish such a force of militia as General Taylor might designate. August 28 similar letters were sent to the Governors of Kentucky and Tennessee. August 30 the Secretary of War wrote General Taylor:

The instructions heretofore issued enjoin upon you to defend Texas from invasion and Indian hostilities, and should Mexico invade it, you will employ all your forces to repulse the invaders, and drive all Mexican troops beyond the Rio Grande. Should you judge the forces under your command inadequate, you will not fail to draw sufficient auxiliary aid from Texas, and, if there be need, from the States, pursuant to your previous instructions. It is not to be doubted that, on your notification, volunteer troops to the number you may require will rally with alacrity to your standard. You have been advised that the assembling of a large Mexican army on the borders of Texas, and crossing the Rio Grande with a considerable force, will be regarded by

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 84.

^b In addition to Texas these States were Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky. See letter Hon. William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, to General Taylor, August 23, 1845.—EDITORS.

^c House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, pp. 84, 85.

the Executive here as an invasion of the United States and the commencement of hostilities. An attempt to cross the river with such a force will also be considered in the same light. * * *

In case of war, either declared or made manifest by hostile acts, your main object will be the protection of Texas; but the pursuit of this object will not necessarily confine your action within the territory of Texas. Mexico having thus commenced hostilities you may, in your discretion, should you have sufficient force and be in a condition to do so, cross the Rio Grande, disperse or capture the forces assembling to invade Texas, defeat the junction of troops uniting for that purpose, drive them from their positions on either side of that river, and, if deemed practicable and expedient, take and hold possession of Matamoras and other places in the country. I scarcely need to say that enterprises of this kind are only to be ventured on under circumstances presenting a fair prospect of success.^a

The full significance of these orders should not escape our attention. They not only contemplated the possibility of an invasion, but going far beyond, they looked to a bold and aggressive war to be prosecuted by the same class of troops as were called out at the beginning of the war of 1812.

But this was not all. In plain violation of the Constitution, which only authorizes the employment of militia "to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions," the orders, in case the General saw fit to call out the militia, sanctioned his entrance into a foreign country with troops of this description. As had already occurred in our history, such a force, pleading constitutional limitations, could have abandoned him the moment he crossed the frontier.

Without dwelling on this germ of dissolution in his army, had he called out and sought to rely upon raw troops, let us under his instructions look at the possibility of receiving timely aid in case of need. Corpus Christi is from 100 to 150 miles from the nearest point on the Rio Grande. Half of this distance, had the enemy been prepared, could possibly have been traversed without exciting the alarm of our commander. Five days later our regular forces, numbering on paper but 4,000 men, might have found themselves face to face with the Mexican army, with no option, under the orders, except to give or receive battle. Even had it taken ten days for the Mexican army to move from the Rio Grande to Corpus Christi, it would have been impossible for a single company or regiment of militia to have joined the army, except possibly from Texas.

The want of care and foresight in these instructions to our commanders was soon to receive a more positive proof. On the 4th of October, 1845, General Taylor wrote from Corpus Christi that if the Government, in settling the question of boundary, proposed the line of the Rio Grande as an ultimatum, he could not doubt that the settlement would be facilitated and hastened by taking possession of one or two points on or near the river.^b

This suggestion, submitted with great deference, appears to have been adopted, for on the 13th of January, 1846, the Secretary of War, by direction of the President, instructed him to advance and occupy as soon as practicable "positions on or near the east bank of the Rio del Norte." The Secretary stated in conclusion:

It is not designed, in our present relations with Mexico, that you should treat her as an enemy; but should she assume that character by a declaration of war, or any open act of hostility toward us, you will not act merely on the defensive, if your relative means enable you to do otherwise.

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, pp. 88, 89.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 108.

Since instructions were given you to draw aid from Texas, in case you should deem it necessary, the relations between that State and the United States have undergone some modification. Texas is now fully incorporated into our union of States, and you are hereby authorized to make a requisition upon the Executive of that State for such of its militia force as may be needed to repel invasion or to secure the country against apprehended invasion.^a

March 2, the Secretary again wrote:

You can not fail to have timely notice of the approach of any considerable Mexican force, and, in that event, will promptly and efficiently use the authority with which you are clothed to call to you such auxiliary forces as you may need. The Governor of Texas has been notified that you are authorized by the President to make a requisition on him for troops, and it is not doubted that he will promptly respond to any call you may make for that purpose.

Your advance to the Rio del Norte will bring you, as a matter of course, nearer to your assailants in case of hostilities, and at the same time remove you to a greater distance from the region from which auxiliary aid can be drawn. This consideration will naturally induce you to take more than ordinary care to be in a safe position and prepared to sustain yourself against any assault.^b

These instructions were still vague. They gave the commander the undoubted authority to call upon Texas at once, but as the use of the militia was qualified by the expressions "to repel invasion," "to secure the country against apprehended invasion," "the approach of a considerable Mexican force," the responsibility of incurring expense was thrown upon the commander, who, under the spirit of his instructions, could do nothing less than await future events.

In the meantime the necessity for increasing the Regular Army as the only means of insuring economy and safety was not lost sight of by the Government. General Scott, in his annual report in November, 1845, recommended the addition of one regiment of artillery and three of infantry, as also an increase of the number of privates per company in all of the existing regiments. His plan for the increase of the rank and file contemplated the addition of 10 privates to each company of dragoons, and 20 to each company of artillery and infantry, still further qualified by his preference for 100 privates per company. By adopting this plan he added:

Our present skeleton Army may then, without an additional regiment and by the mere addition of privates, be augmented 7,960 men (more than doubled), making a total of noncommissioned officers, etc., of 15,843.

I offer but elements. It is for higher authorities to determine the extent (if any) and mode of augmentation. But I may add that companies with but 42 privates cannot be isolated, as the ordinary service of the frontiers so frequently requires, and hence are often doubled to garrison even some of the smaller posts.^c

The Secretary of War in his annual report was not less statesman-like and explicit. After explaining that the concentration of troops in Texas had left the long line of the British frontier guarded by a few posts, that many fortifications on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts were without garrisons, that the troops on the frontier were not more than sufficient to protect the settlements, and that apprehensions and anxiety existed in relation to the abandonment of posts, he continued:

I would respectfully recommend that authority to increase the number of privates in a company, to any number not exceeding eighty should be vested in the President, to be exercised at his discretion, with special reference to what the public interest might suddenly require.

This mode of enlarging the Army, by adding to the rank and file of the present companies, will not, it is believed, impair, but, on the contrary, greatly improve their

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 91.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 92.

^c Senate Ex. Doc. No. 1, Twenty-ninth Congress, first session, p. 210.

comparative efficiency, and on that account, as well as on the score of economy, is deemed preferable to that of effecting the same object by raising new regiments at this time.

It is only in view of a probability that a force considerably larger than a permanent peace establishment might soon be required that I should prefer the mode of increasing the Army by raising new regiments, organized on our present reduced scale. This scale is undoubtedly too low for actual service and has nothing to recommend it to a preference under any circumstances but the facility it affords of expanding an army so organized by increasing the rank and file, and of rendering it effective for service in a shorter period than new regiments could be raised, organized, and disciplined. "

These reports accompanied the President's message on the 2d of December, 1845. Had Congress acted promptly on their recommendations it would not have been necessary, three months later, to have instructed General Taylor to depend upon raw troops.

However, this officer left Corpus Christi on the 8th of March, established en route a base of supplies at Point Isabel, and reached the Rio Grande on the 28th at a point opposite Matamoras.

The next day he wrote to the Adjutant-General:

The attitude of the Mexicans is so far decidedly hostile. An interview has been held, by my direction, with the military authorities in Matamoras, but with no satisfactory result. Under this state of things I must again and urgently call your attention to the necessity of speedily sending recruits to this army. The militia of Texas are so remote from the border * * * that we can not depend upon their aid. The strength gained by filling up the regiments here, even to the present feeble establishment, would be of very great importance. *b*.

The army of occupation on arriving opposite Matamoras, was composed as follows:

"Army of Occupation" on the frontiers of Texas, May, 1846. ^c

Regiments and corps.	Number of companies.	Present.		Aggregate present and absent.
		Officers.	Men.	
OLD ESTABLISHMENT.				
General staff.....		20		20
Second Dragoons.....	7	13	253	368
First Artillery.....	4	17	288	344
Second Artillery.....	4	13	185	217
Third Artillery.....	4	12	187	210
Fourth Artillery.....	4	11	169	205
Third Infantry.....	10	25	372	464
Fourth Infantry.....	10	23	295	383
Fifth Infantry.....	10	18	370	472
Seventh Infantry.....	10	30	345	418
Eighth Infantry.....	10	27	375	433
Total.....	73	209	2,839	3,554

By giving each of the 73 companies 100 privates, which might have been done but for a defect in the law, this force could have been raised from 3,554 to 7,300 men, which, with the full quota of officers, non-commissioned officers, and musicians, would have made this force exceed 8,000. This would have given it an effective strength of nearly 6,000 men present for duty.

While these figures are interesting as showing that the needless exposure of our little army had its origin in faulty legislation, the weakness of its numbers in no way daunted its commander. He knew

^a Senate Ex. Doc. No. 1, Twenty-ninth Congress, first session, p. 195, 196.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 132, 133.

^c House Ex. Doc. No. 24, Thirty-first Congress, first session, p. 8a—table.

that four-fifths of his officers had received the benefits of professional training at the Military Academy or in the Florida war. Beyond this, he was conscious that the discipline and esprit de corps of his troops had been brought to the highest point by six months of training in the camp of instruction at Corpus Christi. With this preparation and, as has been observed, with practically no authority to increase his force till an invasion should actually take place, the commander was soon destined to confront a large and well-organized Mexican army.

The first collision occurred on the 25th of April, when Thornton's dragoons in a skirmish on the east bank of the river, suffered a loss of 16 killed and wounded. The emergency having come, General Taylor the next day called upon the Governors of Louisiana and Texas for 5,000 volunteers, but, as was to be expected, the call was too late. The enemy had already crossed the river in large force, and was then threatening his line of communication. Loath to abandon his position, he left the Seventh Infantry and two batteries of artillery to garrison Fort Brown, a field work on the left bank of the river, and on the 1st of May marched with the remainder of the army to Point Isabel. Having replenished his trains and provided for the safety of the depot, he began the return march to the Rio Grande on the evening of the 7th. The next day the crisis arrived. The enemy had invested Fort Brown, and at Palo Alto was drawn up in line of battle to dispute his further advance.

The challenge was promptly accepted. At 2 o'clock our troops moved to the attack, and at dark, after a well-contested engagement, were masters of the field. Though beaten, the enemy was not hopelessly demoralized. The next day he gave battle at Resaca de la Palma, but no longer able to resist the ardor of our troops was again defeated and driven in confusion across the Rio Grande.

The force present at Resaca de la Palma numbered 173 officers and 2,049 men, total 2,222, of whom but 1,700 were engaged.^a

The losses in the two battles were 170 killed and wounded.^b

The strength of the enemy was estimated at 6,000, and his losses in killed and wounded at 1,000.

In concluding his official report General Taylor stated:

Our victory has been decisive. A small force has overcome immense odds of the best troops that Mexico can furnish—veteran regiments perfectly equipped and appointed. Eight pieces of artillery, several colors and standards, a great number of prisoners, including 14 officers, and a large amount of baggage and public property have fallen into our hands. The causes of victory are doubtless to be found in the superior quality of our officers and men.^c

The effect of this brilliant initiative was felt to the end of the war. It gave our troops courage to fight against overwhelming numbers, demoralized the enemy, and afforded a striking proof of the truth of the maxim, "That in war, moral force is to physical as three is to one." In all of the subsequent battles our troops were outnumbered two or three to one, yet they marched steadily forward to victory, and for the first time in our history temporarily convinced our statesmen, if not the people, of the value of professional education and military discipline.

The siege of Fort Brown was raised on the evening of the battle of Resaca de la Palma. On the 11th of May General Taylor proceeded

^a General Taylor's official report—Montgomery's *Life of General Taylor*, pp. 160, 161.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 24, Thirty-first Congress, first session Table B.

^c Montgomery's *Life of General Taylor*, p. 162.

to Point Isabel to arrange for the reinforcements which had begun to arrive. On the 18th, all being in readiness, he crossed the Rio Grande without opposition and closed the campaign by the occupation of Matamoras.

The brilliant victories of the army of occupation in its three weeks' campaign should not make us lose sight of the perils it encountered. The advance to the Rio Grande, it is true, was suggested by the commander, but in adopting the suggestion the only modification of his instructions seemed to make them more ambiguous by changing the emergency for calling out raw troops from "invasion or to secure the country against apprehended invasion," to the still more vague "approach of a considerable Mexican force." As the nearest governor was at least 300 miles away, there was no possibility of receiving reinforcements, even if called for in view of the suggested emergency, inasmuch as the enemy could cross the Rio Grande and fight a battle on the same day. And such, in theory, was the plan of General Arista, the Mexican commander. The passage of the river by General Torrejon on April 24, which led to the skirmish on the 25th and to General Taylor's requisition for militia on the 26th, was to have been followed by the main body of the army with the expectation of cutting our line of communication and forcing our army to immediate battle. Delays, however, in crossing the river retarded the movement till the 1st of May, when the army returned to Point Isabel.

The conflict was thus deferred till May 8, when, as we have seen, the battle of Palo Alto was fought three days before the first reinforcements made their appearance at Point Isabel. This act sufficiently proves the want of reflection which dictated the President's instructions. Had they been transmitted through the general in chief, as is now wisely required by law,^a he could in a measure have been held responsible had he failed to offer his professional advice. But whether or not he was taken into the confidence of the President, the fact still remains that in trying to economize by depending upon raw troops, the orders to our commanders invited a series of disasters from which we were alone rescued by the skill and fortitude of a disciplined army.

Such was the excitement and alarm lest General Taylor's troops should be overwhelmed, that volunteers came forward far beyond the numbers specified in his requisitions. In New Orleans the veteran commander, General Gaines, who in nearly every disturbance since the war of 1812 had called out troops without waiting for instructions from the Government, set to work to organize and equip an army on his own responsibility, the term of enlistment being fixed at six months. So rapidly did he proceed, calling on the governors of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Missouri, that, before he could be stopped by being relieved from command, the number of troops sent to General Taylor exceeded 8,000.

The total number of troops who responded to the calls of the two commanders was:

Three months' men.....	1,390
Six months' men illegally enlisted and held for three months, the legal term of the militia.....	11,211
Total	12,601

^a The act of Congress directing that orders to the Army be promulgated through the commanding general was passed March 2, 1867, and was repealed July 15, 1870.—EDITORS.

The number of men received from Louisiana was 5,389. The arrival of these troops after the emergency had passed was attended by other evidences of mismanagement. They had been called to arms and embarked by a stroke of the pen, but when they landed, so destitute were they of equipment and transportation that they were compelled to remain in idleness near their depots of subsistence until discharged from the service. Called out for three months, they returned to their homes without the satisfaction of having fired a shot, their losses by death being 145—but 25 short of those killed and wounded (170) at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

MILITARY LEGISLATION DURING THE WAR.

The report of the first skirmish reached the War Department on Saturday, May 9, 1846. On Monday, the 11th, the President sent a message to Congress, then in session, stating that war existed by the act of Mexico, and adding that—

In further vindication of our rights, and defence of the Territory, I invoke the prompt action of Congress to recognize the existence of the war, and to place at the disposition of the Executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor, and thus hastening the restoration of peace. To this end I recommend that authority should be given to call into the public service a large body of volunteers, to serve for not less than six or twelve months, unless sooner discharged. A volunteer force is beyond question more efficient than any other description of citizen soldiers; and it is not to be doubted that a number far beyond that required would readily rush to the field upon the call of their country. I further recommend that a liberal provision be made for sustaining our entire military force and furnishing it with supplies and munitions of war.

The most energetic and prompt measures and the immediate appearance in arms of a large and overpowering force are recommended to Congress as the most certain and efficient means of bringing the existing collision with Mexico to a speedy and successful termination.^a

In these few brief lines is to be found the primary cause of all the subsequent delay and extravagance attending the prosecution of the war. Ignoring the experience of the Revolution, of the war of 1812, and later still of the Florida war, whose aggregate duration exceeded sixteen years, without pausing to compute, in the absence of railroads, the time required to transport troops from one to two thousand miles to the scene of hostilities, the President not only expressed his confidence in raw troops, but signified his belief in a formal recommendation to Congress that we could bring a foreign war to a successful conclusion in the brief space of from six to twelve months.

The responsibility for this recommendation cannot wholly be laid upon the President. General Taylor, a witness of the feeble and protracted prosecution of the two preceding wars, in his letter reporting the skirmish of Thornton's dragoons, stated:

If a law could be passed authorizing the President to raise volunteers for twelve months, it would be of the greatest importance for a service so remote from support as this.^b

The promptitude with which Congress entertained and complied with the President's unfortunate recommendation finds no parallel in

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 196, Twenty-ninth Congress, first session, p. 6.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 141.

our history.^a The very day his message was received a bill to raise 50,000 volunteers was introduced, and under the operation of the previous question passed the House of Representatives. The next day it passed the Senate, and on the 13th received the President's signature.

The first section of the act read as follows:

Whereas, by the act of the Republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that Government and the United States, that, for the purpose of enabling the Government of the United States to prosecute said war to a speedy and successful termination, the President be, and he is hereby, authorized to employ the militia, naval, and military forces of the United States, and to call for and accept the services of any number of volunteers, not exceeding 50,000, who may offer their services, either as cavalry, artillery, infantry, or riflemen, to serve twelve months after they shall have arrived at the place of rendezvous, or to the end of the war, unless sooner discharged, according to the time for which they shall have been mustered into service; and that the sum of \$10,000,000, out of any moneys in the Treasury, or to come into the Treasury, not otherwise appropriated, be, and the same is hereby, appropriated for the purpose of carrying the provisions of this act into effect.^b

The second section extended the term of the militia, when called into the service of the United States, to six months; the third section required the volunteers to furnish their own clothes, horses, and equipments, the arms to be furnished by the United States; the fourth section gave to each volunteer, as compensation for his clothing, the cost of clothing allowed to a regular soldier; the fifth section, ignoring the fact that the new force was not militia, authorized the officers to be appointed according to the laws of their several States; the ninth section gave the volunteers the same pay and allowances as regular soldiers, and allowed to those who were mounted a compensation for their horses of 40 cents per day.

It ought not to surprise us if a law passed without debate should have contained many costly, if not dangerous, mistakes. The principal one of these was contained in the brief words "to serve twelve months" or "to the end of the war." Whether this unfortunate alternative may be regarded as evidence of the conviction on the part of Congress that a foreign war could be brought to a speedy and successful end in twelve months—a thing that has never occurred, and probably never will occur under our present system—or as an expression of its confidence in the wisdom and judgment of the President, it is not necessary to discuss.

As might have been foreseen, the sequel proved that our best and only safeguard lies in wise legislation. The provisions of the law, more liberal than those recommended by the President, authorized him, at his option, to accept the services of volunteers "for twelve months" or "for the war." Instead of deciding upon the volunteers for the war, the President permitted the circular calling for the new troops to be couched in the exact wording of the law, thereby enabling each volunteer, at the expiration of twelve months, to elect whether he would receive his discharge or remain in service till the end of the war.

^a Under the joint resolution of Congress of April 20, 1898, and the Act of Congress, dated April 22, 1898, President McKinley issued a call for 125,000 volunteers for the Spanish war on April 23. On May 31, a little more than a month after the President's proclamation, nearly all of this immense force of volunteers had been mustered into the United States service. Under the call of the President of May 25, 75,000 additional volunteers were called for. The last volunteers under these two calls, were mustered in, August 24, 1898.—EDITORS.

^b Callan's Military Laws of the United States, first section, p. 367,

The dilemma in which the Government thus placed itself by mere want of foresight was foreshadowed in the annual report of the Secretary of War of December 5, 1846. After stating that the volunteers in their encounters with the enemy had "more than justified the expectations formed of that description of troops," but "that it was no disparagement to them to say that a regular force was to be preferred in a war to be prosecuted in a foreign country," he added:

Those who are now in the field, with the exception of one regiment sent out to California, entered the service under the alternative of continuing in it for twelve months or to the end of the war; and it is presumed they will have the right—at all events they will have the permission if they claim the right—to retire from the service at the end of that period, which will expire about the (end) 1st of June next.^a

The needless expense caused by this great mistake may be inferred from the fact that on the 13th of May, the day the law received the President's signature, requisitions were made upon the governors of the States of Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio—

for a volunteer force equal to 26 regiments, amounting in all, with a battalion from the District and Maryland, to about 23,000 effective men, to serve for the period of twelve months or to the end of the war.^b

* * * * *

Nine regiments and one battalion of volunteers have been recently called for from various States to serve to the end of the war, and the information received at the Department gives the assurance that these requisitions will be promptly and cheerfully complied with.^c

The above showed the effort made to retrieve the error already committed and proved that the requirement of service "for the war" would in no wise have lessened the spirit of volunteering.

Although not so dangerous to the success of our arms as the error just referred to, there was another defect in the law which diminished our strength and at the same time exposed the new levies to needless suffering and privation. Under the construction of the fourth section of the act, it was decided that the volunteers first called out should receive, on being mustered into service, the cost of a year's clothing, amounting to \$42. The effect was thus explained by the Secretary in his report:

This sum was not always appropriated for clothing, and many of them soon became so destitute as to suffer in their health, and in other respects to be scarcely fit for service. To this cause, in no inconsiderable degree, is to be ascribed the great disparity of sickness between volunteers and regular troops, the latter being well clothed by the Government and comparatively much more healthy.^d

The military legislation on the 13th of May was not limited to raising a force of volunteers. Another act of the same date authorized the President, by voluntary enlistment, to increase the number of privates in each or any of the companies of the dragoons, artillery, and infantry to not exceeding 100, the number to be reduced to 64 when the exigency requiring the increase should cease.

It will thus be seen that while during peace all discretion to increase the Army was withheld from the President through motives of economy, or of jealousy of the Army, the moment war was declared the power of expanding it was freely committed to his trust, a power that enabled him, without adding an officer to the line, to raise the enlisted strength from 7,580 to 15,540.

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 54.

^b Report of Secretary of War. House Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 47.

^c Same, p. 54.

^d House Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 56.

Had this discretion been granted to the President by the law of 1842, the army of occupation need not have been exposed to an attack by an army of three times its numbers; neither would there have been any occasion to expose to the ravages of disease the thousands of three months' men who rushed to its rescue.

On the 19th of May a regiment of mounted riflemen intended for service in Oregon was added to the Army. The remaining laws, from May 13 to the month of August, the end of the first session of the Twenty-ninth Congress, mainly related to the temporary increase during the war, of the various staff departments.

The Army, as organized by the foregoing laws, numbered 775 officers and 17,020 men; total, 17,812;^a but so slow was the recruitment that, by the return of December 5, 1846, the aggregate present and absent numbered 10,690,^b leaving a deficiency of recruits amounting to 6,958.

The reasons for this deficiency, the same as existed during the Revolution and the War of 1812, were plainly set forth in the Secretary's report.

The want of better success in recruiting is, I apprehend, mainly to be ascribed to the large number of volunteers which has, in the meantime, been called out. The volunteer service is regarded generally by our citizens as preferable to that in the Regular Army, and as long as volunteers are expected to be called for it will be difficult to fill the ranks of the regular regiments unless additional inducements are offered or the terms of service modified. A small pecuniary bounty given at the time of enlistment, or land at the end of the term of service, would, it is believed, have a most beneficial effect. Probably an equally favorable result would flow from annexing a condition to the present period of service, allowing the recruit to be discharged at the end of the present war. It is presumed there are many thousand patriotic citizens who would cheerfully enter the service for the war if they could return to the pursuits of civil life at its close.^c

The second section of the law for the increase of the staff departments merits attention. It authorized the President—

to call into the service, under the act approved May 13, 1846, such of the general officers of the militia as the service, in his opinion, may require, and to organize into brigades and divisions the forces authorized by said act, according to his direction.^d

This section would apparently denote that Congress regarded the volunteers under the Constitution as substantially the same as the militia, and that conformably with the law of 1792 the Governors of States had an equitable right to the appointment of all the officers, from the highest to the lowest grades. This partial adhesion to the State system was the means, in many instances, of placing the fortunes of the country, as well as the lives of our soldiers, in the hands of generals utterly ignorant of the military art at a time when the Government had at its disposal numbers of competent officers who had devoted their lives to the theory and practice of their profession.

The first law of the next session was passed on the 12th of January, 1847, and, pursuant to the recommendation of the Secretary of War, permitted recruits to enlist in the Regular Army for the period of "five years" or "during the war." The recruits were also to receive a bounty of \$12, \$6 paid in hand, the remainder to be retained till the recruit joined the regiment. Had patriotic citizens been permitted to enlist in the Regular Army for the war at the outset, it is probable that the difficulties of recruitment might have been largely diminished.

^a Army Register, 1847.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 68.

House Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 53.

^c Callan's Military Laws of the United States, first section, p. 373.

The legislation of the new session was not limited to the recruitment of the Army. On the 11th of February, but not till more than two months after the commencement of the session, Congress passed an act increasing the Army by 1 regiment of dragoons and 9 of infantry, the regiments to serve, and the men to be enlisted, for the war. One of these infantry regiments was to be organized and equipped as voltigeurs and foot riflemen, and to be provided with a rocket and mountain howitzer battery.^a

The second section of the law, recognizing, in the absence of the law of retirement, the great scarcity of field officers with the troops, authorized the appointment of an additional major to each of the regiments of dragoons, artillery, infantry, and riflemen, the majors to be selected from the captains of the Army.

The necessity for a law of retirement, which was strongly urged during the Florida war, was again presented at the beginning of the Mexican war. On the 30th of July, 1846, the Adjutant-General reported that out of 12 field officers of artillery but 4 were able to take the field, the remainder being disqualified by reason of age, wounds, or other disabilities. In the infantry one-third of the 24 field officers were disqualified to take the field for the same reasons. In the 5 regiments of infantry, belonging to the army of occupation, there were present but 6 field officers, 2 of whom, General Taylor and General Worth, held commands higher than a regiment.^b

The ninth section gave to every soldier, whether volunteer or regular, who had enlisted for twelve months, a bounty, on receiving an honorable discharge, of 160 acres of land, or the equivalent of \$100 in Treasury scrip bearing interest at 6 per cent. Soldiers of less than a year's service were in like manner given a bounty of 40 acres of land or \$25 in scrip. Other sections of this law provided for an increase of the Pay and Quartermaster's Departments, necessitated by the general increase of the line. The delay in the passage of the above law, which was recommended in the President's message at the beginning of the session, made it impossible for the new regiments to arrive in the field till late in the summer.

March 3, 1847, another act was passed, authorizing an increase of the general officers to correspond to the number of new regiments which were to be discharged at the end of the war. The second section added a lieutenant-colonel and two captains to the Adjutant-General's Department.

The third section, passed on the President's recommendation as a means of partially retrieving the mistake of short enlistments, authorized him to organize into companies, battalions, and regiments such volunteers then in Mexico as would reenlist for the war. The section also contained the important recognition of the right of the President to commission the officers of volunteers.

The fourth section gave to the volunteers so reenlisting a bounty of \$12. The fifth section authorized the President to accept the services of individual volunteers to fill vacancies in any of the existing regiments of volunteers. These three sections clearly indicated a growing difficulty in procuring volunteers to replace casualties, a difficulty that would have increased in accordance with all previous experience in direct proportion to the prolongation of the war.

^a Callan's Military Laws of the United States, first section, p. 379.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, pp. 72, 73.

The twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth sections increased the Pay Department; the sixteenth section added 2 captains and 6 first lieutenants to the Ordnance Department; the eighteenth section added 2 companies to each regiment of artillery, and authorized 2 light batteries to be equipped in each regiment; the twenty-first section, recognizing the difficulty of recruiting by voluntary enlistment, authorized the President, in case of failure in filling any regiment or regiments (regulars or volunteers), to consolidate such deficient regiment or regiments, and discharge all supernumerary officers. This law, passed the day before the close of the second session of the Twenty-ninth Congress, completed all the military legislation of the war.

As organized under the foregoing laws, the Army was composed as follows:^a

	Officers.	Men.	Total.
General staff *.....	86	.....	86
Medical department	85	.....	85
Pay department	31	.....	31
Military storekeepers	17	.....	17
Corps of engineers	43	100	143
Corps of topographical engineers	36	.....	36
Ordnance department	36	620	656
Three regiments of dragoons	118	3,408	3,526
One regiment mounted riflemen	35	1,146	1,181
Four regiments of artillery	208	5,492	5,700
Sixteen regiments of infantry	648	17,664	18,312
One regiment of infantry	47	1,104	1,151
Aggregate	1,356	29,534	30,890

* Eleven assistant adjutants-general and 23 assistant quartermasters of the general staff, being detailed from the line and counted in their regiments, are, to avoid being counted twice, deducted from the number 86 in summing up the total officers and aggregate of officers and men.

The field officers of each of the line regiments consisted of 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, and 2 majors.

The strength of each company and regiment in the different arms was as follows:

	Officers.	Men.	Total.
First and second dragoons (old army):			
Company	3	113	116
Regiment (10 companies)	35	1,136	1,171
Third dragoons (new army):			
Company (1 captain, 1 first lieutenant, 2 second lieutenants)	4	113	117
Regiment (10 companies)	43	1,136	1,184
Mounted riflemen:			
Company	3	114	117
Regiment (10 companies)	35	1,146	1,181
Artillery:			
Company (1 captain, 2 first lieutenants, 1 second lieutenant)	4	114	118
Regiment (12 companies)	52	1,373	1,425
Infantry (old army):			
Company	3	110	113
Regiment (10 companies)	34	1,104	1,138
Infantry and voltigeurs (new army):			
Company (1 captain, 1 first lieutenant, 2 second lieutenants)	4	110	114
Regiment (10 companies)	47	1,104	1,151

The adjutants in the regiments of dragoons and riflemen were extra lieutenants. The adjutants of artillery, infantry, and voltigeurs, as

^a Army Register, 1848.

also the regimental quartermasters in all arms of the service, were lieutenants detailed from the subalterns. This provision in time of war proved to be false economy. It necessarily reduced two companies in each infantry regiment to two officers each at the beginning of a campaign, and when casualties occurred, exposed it to the danger of being left without a commissioned officer.

Having examined all military legislation since the announcement of hostilities, we may now return to the operations of the army on the Rio Grande.

CAMPAIGNS OF MONTEREY AND BUENA VISTA.

So rapid was the organization of volunteers under the President's call of May 13, 1846, that some of the new regiments arrived on the Rio Grande during the month of June, and such numbers soon followed that the commander was at a loss as to their employment and subsistence. In fact, when he proceeded in August up the Rio Grande to Camargo, and thence began his march to Monterey, with an army composed of two divisions of regulars and a field division of volunteers—his entire force but little more than 6,000—he was compelled to leave no less than 6,000 volunteers behind. His reasons for this were given in Order No. 108, issued at Camargo on August 28, 1846:

The limited means of transportation, and the uncertainty in regard to the supplies that may be drawn from the theater of operations, imposes upon the commanding general the necessity of taking into the field, in the first instance, only a moderate portion of the volunteer force under his orders.^a

It further appears that "while some 20,000 volunteers were sent to the theater of war, not a wagon reached the advance of General Taylor till after the capture of Monterey."^b

This lack of transportation developed in a striking manner the want in our War Department of a bureau of military statistics. General Jesup, the Quartermaster-General, wrote to the Secretary of War from New Orleans, on the 15th of December, 1845:

As to the complaint in regard to the want of land transportation, it is proper to remark that there was no information at Washington, so far as I was informed, to enable me or the War Department to determine whether wagons could be used in Mexico.^c

This deficiency of wagons, however, in the end proved to our advantage, since it enabled the commander to form the volunteers who were left behind, into an army of the second line and to drill and prepare them for future campaigns. The importance which General Taylor attached to instruction was referred to by a writer who, after describing the causes of our success at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, stated:

Never was the value of disciplined men more triumphantly demonstrated than on these glorious occasions; and since we have learned that General Taylor compels the volunteers with him to receive six hours' drilling per day and relieves them from all other duties, to make soldiers of them, we venture to predict that they, too, when they meet the enemy, will add to the reputation of our arms. "Rough and Ready" will first make them soldiers and then win victories with them.

This prophecy was not slow of fulfillment. In the battle around Monterey, from the 20th to the 23d of September, the volunteers fought

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 119, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 210.

^b Stevens's Campaigns of the Rio Grande and of Mexico, p. 21.

^c Montgomery's Life of General Taylor, p. 169.

with a steadiness that earned the applause of their comrades of the regulars.

The forces engaged at Monterey numbered,—Mexicans, 10,000, of whom 7,000 were regulars; Americans, regulars and volunteers, 6,645.^a The losses in these battles, which resulted in the capitulation of the city—the Mexican garrison being permitted to retire with their arms—were:

Regulars, killed and wounded ^b	205
Volunteers ^c	282

But a still greater triumph awaited the volunteers. In January, 1847, nearly all the regular troops, as also a large number of volunteers, were withdrawn to take part under General Scott in the campaign against the City of Mexico.

This detachment, which it was expected would confine General Taylor to the defensive, at least till after the arrival of new regiments of volunteers called out for the war, reduced the force with which in December he had advanced beyond Saltillo to about 6,000 men. Availing himself, with the instincts of a skillful commander, of this division of our forces, General Santa Ana advanced to Buena Vista, where, on the 22d and 23d of February, he sought to overwhelm and capture our army. In this battle, the most desperate of the war, our forces, numbering 4,759 men, of whom but 517 were regulars, defeated the entire Mexican army, estimated at 20,000.^d Our losses were 746 killed, wounded, and missing.^e The Mexican loss was estimated at 1,500.^f In his official report General Taylor gave the regular artillery, composed of the celebrated batteries of Washington, Sherman, and Bragg, the credit of saving the day. But the battle of Buena Vista, like all great battles, was fought chiefly by infantry, and the gallant volunteers, who, against overwhelming numbers, successfully maintained the honor of our arms, had been undergoing field training for nearly eight months, a period twice as long as the time considered necessary to transform a recruit into a regular soldier.

In referring to General Wool, General Taylor in his official report stated:

The high state of discipline and instruction of several of the volunteer regiments was attained under his command, and to his vigilance and arduous service before the action and his gallantry and activity on the field a large share of our success may justly be attributed.^g

General Taylor and General Wool were not alone in their efforts to discipline and instruct the Army. The commander of the Mississippi Rifles, as also the field officers of the Second Kentucky Volunteers, of which the colonel and lieutenant-colonel laid down their lives, were former officers of the Army.

^a Ripley's War with Mexico, vol. 1, p. 198, 199.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 24, Thirty-first Congress, first session, p. 10, Table B.

^c Same, p. 28, Table D.

^d General Taylor's official report, Ex. Doc. No. 1, Twenty-ninth Congress, first session. In his official report of the battle, Santa Ana states that he left San Luis Potosi with 18,133 men, and that his artillery train consisted of 17 pieces. General orders found on the battlefield indicate that he had 20 pieces of artillery. In summoning General Taylor to surrender, the Mexican commander gave his strength at 20,000 men.—

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^e House Ex. Doc., No. 24, House of Representatives, Thirty-first Congress, first session, p. 13 B and 29 D.

^f General Taylor's official report, Montgomery's Life of General Taylor, p. 299

^g Montgomery's Life of General Taylor, pp. 298, 299.

In addition to this preparation, when the critical moment arrived, the courage of the men was everywhere stimulated by the example and conduct of the artillery. Without waiting for support it moved rapidly from position to position, over the roughest ground, "its well-directed fire" dealing destruction "in the masses of the enemy." "Always in action at the right place and the right time,"^a it served as rallying points for the broken and hard-pressed infantry, which but for its presence must have been driven in confusion from the field.

In this one fact—the ability of the infantry to rally—when in some regiments nearly all of the field officers were killed or disabled, we have the crowning proof that the volunteers at Buena Vista were no longer raw troops. They gave evidence to the true statesman, that in rescuing victory from defeat, their discipline, no less than their patriotism had made them worthy to receive the applause of a grateful country. The battle of Buena Vista, begun on the anniversary of Washington's birthday, terminated the brilliant exploits of the army of occupation.

CAMPAIGN OF THE CITY OF MEXICO.

Up to the capitulation of Monterey it was hoped that by occupying the northern provinces, Mexico would accept propositions of peace; but when subsequent events proved this idea to be fallacious, it was decided to carry the war to her capital through the gateway of Vera Cruz. Accordingly, in November, 1846, General Scott sailed for Brazos (Point Isabel), where he collected and organized an army, which, like General Taylor, he was to lead from victory to victory.

Before proceeding to the field, he submitted on the 27th of October, a memorandum to the Secretary of War, in which he estimated the minimum force required to capture Vera Cruz at 10,000 men; this number, with a view to ulterior operations, to be increased by the month of March to 20,000; the reinforcements to be composed of volunteers and the new regiments of regulars expected to be raised by the next Congress.

On the 23d of November, before leaving Washington, he expressed

^a In reporting the battle, General Taylor said: In the meantime the firing had ceased upon the principal field. The enemy seemed to confine his efforts to the protection of his artillery, and I had left the plateau for a moment, when I was called thither by a very heavy musketry fire. On regaining that position I discovered that our infantry (Illinois and Second Kentucky), had engaged a greatly superior force of the enemy—evidently his reserves—and that they had been overwhelmed by numbers. The moment was most critical. Captain O'Brien, with two pieces, had sustained his heavy charge to the very last, and was finally obliged to leave his guns on the field—his infantry support being entirely routed. Captain Bragg, who had just arrived from the left, was ordered at once into battery. Without any infantry to support him, and at the imminent risk of losing his guns, this officer came rapidly into action, the Mexican line being but a few yards from the muzzle of his pieces. The first discharge of canister caused the enemy to hesitate; the second and third drove him back in disorder and saved the day. The Second Kentucky Regiment, which had advanced beyond supporting distance in this affair, was driven back and closely pressed by the enemy's cavalry. Taking a ravine which led in the direction of Captain Washington's cavalry, their pursuers became exposed to his fire, which soon checked and drove them back with loss. In the meantime the rest of our artillery had taken position on the plateau, covered by the Mississippi and Third Indiana Regiments, the former of which had reached the ground in time to pour a fire into the right flank of the enemy, and thus contribute to his repulse. In this last conflict we had the misfortune to sustain a very heavy loss. Colonel Hardin, First Illinois, and Colonel McKee and Lieutenant-Colonel Clay, Second Kentucky Regiments, fell at this time while gallantly heading their commands.

to the Secretary of War a willingness to proceed with the expedition, if necessary, with 8,000 men. From Brazos, January 12, he wrote to the Secretary of War:

Should success crown our arms on the coast—and I will not anticipate a failure—I beg to repeat that a reenforcement of 10,000 or 12,000 regulars (new regiments and recruits for the old) will be indispensable (about April), to enable me to make a consecutive advance on the enemy's capital.^a

The necessary troops, regulars and volunteers, having been collected and embarked at Brazos, General Scott sailed for Vera Cruz, where he arrived on the 7th of March, disembarked on the 9th, invested the city on the 10th, and on the 29th received its surrender. After the surrender the organization of our army, before moving on the enemy's capital, was as follows:^b

First Regular Division, Bvt. Maj. Gen. William J. Worth, commanding: Light Company A, Second Artillery; Second Artillery, 8 companies; Third Artillery, 4 companies; Fourth Infantry, 6 companies; Fifth Infantry, 6 companies; Sixth Infantry, 5 companies; Eighth Infantry, 7 companies.

Second Regular Division, Brig. Gen. David E. Twiggs, commanding: Light Company K, First Artillery; howitzer and rocket company; regiment mounted rifles, 9 companies; First Artillery; Fourth Artillery, 6 companies; Second Infantry, 9 companies; Third Infantry, 6 companies; Seventh Infantry, 6 companies.

Volunteer division, Major-General Patterson commanding: Third Illinois; Fourth Illinois; New York regiment, 10 companies; First Tennessee; Second Tennessee; Kentucky regiment; First Pennsylvania, 10 companies; Second Pennsylvania, 10 companies; South Carolina regiment, 11 companies; detachment of mounted Tennessee Volunteers.

Not assigned to divisions: One company of engineers; 1 company of ordnance; 6 companies of cavalry.

The strength of the army, composed of 21 different regiments or parts of regiments, was less than 12,000 men.^c

Having established his base of operations and completed the organization of his troops, General Scott on the 8th of April began his march into the interior, and on the 18th, at Cerro Gordo, attacked and overthrew the entire Mexican army, capturing seven standards, 3,000 prisoners, and 43 pieces of artillery. So complete was the defeat that, in the language of the general in chief, "Mexico had no longer an army." The road to the capital now lay open before him, but when he sought to advance a defect of legislation put an end to his conquests. The policy of short enlistments, which in so many wars had caused our troops at critical moments to abandon their commanders, was to find its logical conclusion in the dissolution of our army in the heart of an enemy's country.

This result, as might have been foreseen, was due to the option given to the volunteers "to serve twelve months" or "to the end of the war," a result that might have been prevented had any member of Congress familiar with the history of his country sought to strike out the first part of the fatal alternative, or to substitute for it the term of three years. Wisdom, prudence, economy, humanity, and every consideration within the pale of statesmanship, demanded the creation of an army enlisted for the war, and as the popular enthusiasm would have responded to such a call with the same alacrity as for twelve months, the defect in the law can only be ascribed to the haste, if not thoughtlessness, which has so often characterized our military legislation.

^a Stevens' Campaigns of the Rio Grande and of Mexico, p. 48.

^b Memorandum furnished by Adjutant-General.

^c Scott's Autobiography, vol. 2, p. 420.

Fearing exposure to the yellow fever, and beginning to look forward to their discharge six weeks before the expiration of their term of enlistment, General Scott, on the 4th of May, parted with seven of his eleven regiments of volunteers, numbering in the aggregate 4,000 men. Thus reduced by discharge, by expiration of service, and by disease to 5,820^a effective men, our army, which had advanced to Puebla, within three days' march of the enemy's capital, was compelled for more than two months to remain on the defensive, while the enemy, profiting by the delay, reorganized an army of five times its number. In fact, after the discharge of the volunteers, having heard of no reinforcements, except 960 recruits ordered from New York and Newport, Kentucky, General Scott abandoned Jalapa, and with no communication with his base of supplies he found himself needlessly exposed to the danger of investment and capture. Formidable as had been our preparations, they appeared about to collapse, a calamity that was only averted by the superior quality of our troops.

Had the small force of General Scott, embracing nine-tenths of the Regular Army, been captured, experience teaches us that with the system of short enlistments and inexperienced officers, 100,000 raw troops could not have retrieved the disaster. Our failure to appreciate the demands of a foreign war was again proven at this period of our history. The recommendations for a number of new regular regiments, it will be remembered, were not adopted till the 11th of February, 1847, which so delayed their organization that they arrived only in time to participate in the brief operations about the City of Mexico.

The appointment of the officers of these regiments reveals another inconsistency in our military policy. From its foundation the Military Academy had been assailed by enemies who demanded its abolition; but Congress had wisely resisted this clamor, and, refusing to yield to a memorial from the legislature of a State which to-day among its West Point graduates boasts of a Grant, a Sherman, and a Sheridan, had steadily voted appropriations, until at the outbreak of the Mexican war nearly every regular officer below the rank of major had received the benefit of its instruction. Educated at no inconsiderable cost, had these officers been appointed colonels and captains of the new regiments, in a couple of months the latter would have begun to acquire the steadiness of veterans, and in battle would have made a handsome return to the nation for the expense incurred in training its officers.

But a policy so wise was prevented by a defect or an omission, in the law, which was explained by the Secretary as follows:

There is so much doubt whether officers now in the Regular Army would take commissions of not more than one or two grades above those which they now hold, that it is not probable many will be selected for the new regiments. As these regiments are to be disbanded by express provision of the law which authorizes them, at the conclusion of the war, those officers who may be transferred to them would be in great danger of being thrown out of the Army.^b

Had the law, with the object of using professional training to the greatest advantage, prescribed that even the field officers of the new regiments should be selected, as in the case of the additional majors, from the officers of the Army, with the further provision that they should not vacate their commissions, the new troops could soon have been made efficient. In the absence of such a provision, the Army

^aHouse Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 993.

^bHouse Ex. Document No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 873.

Register shows that, with the exception of six officers who were, or had been, in the Regular Army, the officers of the new regiments, numbering more than 400, were appointed fresh from civil life.^a

As a consequence of this policy inexperienced colonels and ignorant captains led the new regiments to battle, while in the old battalions the future commanders of our armies were trudging as file closers in rear of their companies. Such a policy, bad enough for the infantry, when applied to the dragoons, an arm of service requiring for its efficiency years of training, could only result in a waste of the public treasure. At the same time that the new regiments were organizing, the Government as late as April, 1847, continued to accept fresh volunteers, all, it is needless to say, enlisted "for the war."

These new troops, both regulars and volunteers, as fast as organized were forwarded to the little army which for three months had remained at Puebla, overlooking an enemy's capital numbering more than 180,000 people. The slowness with which reinforcements were forwarded to Mexico shows how impossible it would have been to afford succor to our army had the enemy been able to take the offensive.

On the 4th of June a small detachment of 3 companies of dragoons and 6 of infantry, composed almost wholly of recruits, left Vera Cruz with a large train, but being attacked by guerrillas the second day out they were compelled to halt for reinforcements. June 8 General Cadwalader, with another detachment of 500 men, marched to the support of Colonel McIntosh, joined him on the 10th, and together after a sharp skirmish pushed on to Jalapa, where they arrived on the 15th. The 19th, having been joined by the garrison of Jalapa, General Cadwalader again resumed the march, arriving on the 21st at Perote. Here part of his animals having given out, he had to wait till the 23d to refit, when, as he was about to march, he received orders from General Pillow, who had arrived at Vera Cruz on the 13th, to delay till their forces could unite. This being accomplished on the 1st of July, the combined force of 4,500 men resumed the march on the 2d and 3d, and on the 8th joined the army at Puebla. The arrival of the puny reinforcement more than two months and a half after the battle of Cerro Gordo raised the total strength of the army to but 10,276, of whom 2,215, or nearly one-fourth, were sick.^b

On the 19th of July another reinforcement of 3,000 men, composed chiefly of the new regular regiments and recruits for the old army, left Vera Cruz under General Pierce, and, reduced to 2,429 men,^c reached Puebla on the 6th of August. Reinforced in the aggregate to nearly 14,000 men, of whom 3,000 were sick or in hospital, while other detachments were made to guard this line of communications, General Scott, on the 7th of August, resumed the offensive against an army estimated by the Mexicans themselves at 36,000 men and 100 pieces of cannon.^d The composition of his army at the moment of advancing in the face of such overwhelming numbers was as follows:

^a The act of Congress of March 2, 1899, authorized the President to raise a force of not exceeding 35,000 volunteers. It has been said of these regiments that the Government has never had more satisfactory volunteers, and this has been largely attributed to their method of organization, and to the fact that the senior officers in each of the regiments were selected on their efficiency records from the officers of the Regular Army.—EDITORS.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, First session, p. 1013.

^c Ripley's War with Mexico, vol. 2, p. 166.

^d Ripley's War with Mexico, vol. 2, p. 161.

Gen. William J. Worth's division.

Bvt. Col. John Garland's brigade: Second Artillery, Third Artillery, Fourth Infantry.

Col. N. S. Clarke's brigade: Third Infantry, Sixth Infantry, Eighth Infantry, Light Company A, Second Artillery; Light battalion.

Gen. David E. Twigg's division.

Gen. P. F. Smith's brigade: First Artillery; Third Infantry; Rifle Regiment.

Col. B. Riley's brigade: Fourth Artillery; Second Infantry; Seventh Infantry; Engineer company; Ordnance company; Light Company K, First Artillery.

Gen. Gideon J. Pillow's division.

Gen. F. Pierce's brigade: Ninth Infantry; Twelfth Infantry; Fifteenth Infantry.

Gen. George Cadwalader's brigade: Voltigeurs; Fourteenth Infantry; Eleventh Infantry; Light Company I, First Artillery.

Gen. J. A. Quitman's division.

Gen. James Shields's brigade: New York Regiment; South Carolina Regiment; Marine Corps.

Lieut. Col. S. E. Watson's brigade: Second Pennsylvania Volunteers; H Company, Third Artillery; C Company, Third Dragoons.

Gen. Wm. S. Harney's brigade: First Battalion Cavalry; Second Battalion Cavalry.

The relative composition of the army of regulars and volunteers should not escape the reader's attention. The President in his message asked Congress to give him "a large body of volunteers to serve not less than six or twelve months." Congress, going beyond the request, gave him authority to call out 50,000 for "twelve months," or "to the end of the war," and yet, through his own mistake, when the crisis arrived there were but four half-filled regiments present to participate in the conflict.

But those regiments organized in December of 1846 had had the benefit of eight months' training, had already participated in the siege of Vera Cruz and the battle of Cerro Gordo, and were worthy of being called reliable troops. Advancing with an army of less than 10,000 effectives, the brilliant victories of Contreras, Cherubusco, El Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec opened the gates of the capital, which General Scott entered on the 14th of September. In the series of battles, beginning on the 20th of August, our largest force engaged was 8,479; our loss in killed and wounded was 2,703, which reduced the army when it reached the city to less than 6,000 men.

The aggregate strength of the three regiments of volunteers which participated in these battles—the fourth being left to garrison Puebla—was on the morning of the battle of Contreras 1,580. The aggregate strength of the Army, regulars and volunteers, on the same date was 11,052.^a The forwarding of troops after the crisis had passed was not unlike that which followed the battle of Palo Alto.

On the 19th of July the Secretary of War wrote to General Scott that since the 24th of May he had heard of the arrival at Vera Cruz "of 4,603 regular troops (new levies and reorganized companies), 300 marines, and two companies of Pennsylvania volunteers 133 strong," making an aggregate of over 5,000 men.^b

^a Official report of General Scott, dated National Palace, Mexico, September 18, 1847.—A. G. O.

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 1003.

On the 6th of October he again wrote:

There is also a considerable volunteer force which was called out many months since, and has been slow in organizing, now on its way to your column. The Adjutant-General's estimate herewith of the total number of these troops and other detachments make the aggregate force en route under orders and being mustered into service about 15,000, since General Pierce's advance from Vera Cruz on the 14th of July.^a

Notwithstanding these numbers it was not until October 18,^b that General Lane with 3,300 reached Puebla. November 10, General Paterson with 2,600^c arrived at Jalapa; December 14, these combined reinforcements, advancing in two or three columns, concentrated at Puebla to the number of 9,000;^d December 17, their advance reached the City of Mexico. In the meantime such was the sickness of the troops in the army at the capital that those present for duty on December 4, were reported by General Scott as only about 6,000.^e These figures show that in consequence of errors of statesmanship and a bad system of recruitment we needlessly exposed our army to the dangers of capture for a period of more than six months. Had the strength of the army during this time been calculated with nicety, based on a knowledge of the numbers and discipline of the enemy, we might applaud the apparent economy which achieved such results; but with the fact already stated, that for want of a bureau of military statistics, the chief of the most important department of supply could not learn at Washington whether wagons could be used in Mexico, we must ascribe the perils of our troops to the same mismanagement and want of reflection that supplied the means for military operations in 1812.

Notwithstanding the delays in forwarding men and supplies, such was the quality of our troops that the enemy, no longer able to oppose them, listened to propositions of peace, and on the 2d of February, 1848, ratified the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Pursuant to this treaty and the President's proclamation, our army on the 5th of the following July, 26 months after the commencement of hostilities, evacuated Mexican territory.

STATISTICS.

With the salient facts before us, that General Taylor fought the first battles of the war with 2,100 regulars, when, but for the defect of the law, he might have had, by a simple increase of the rank and file, a force of 8,000; that the 13 regiments of the Regular Army with which General Scott landed at Vera Cruz could have been raised to 15,000 men; that with such an army he could have entered the City of Mexico on the heels of Cerro Gordo; that at no time before the event his maximum force exceeded 13,500,^f and that after a brilliant series of battles he finally entered the Mexican capital with less than 6,000 men, let us next consider the number of troops the Government employed:

Regulars (old establishment)

Army of occupation, May, 1846.....	3,554
Number of recruits and troops who joined the Army in Mexico.....	15,736
Total.....	19,290

^a House Ex. Doc. No. 60, Thirtieth Congress, first session, p. 1008.

^b Same, p. 1030.

^c Same, p. 1031.

^d Same, p. 1039.

^e Same, p. 1033.

^f Scott's Autobiography, vol. 2, p. 420.

Regulars (new establishment).

1 regiment of dragoons, 8 regiments of infantry, 1 regiment of voltigeurs	11, 186
Total, Regular Army	30, 476
Battalion of marines	548
Total, regular forces	31, 024

Reenforcements for the old army to the number of 19,066 started for Mexico, leaving, after deducting 15,736 who joined, 3,930 who never reached their destination. The whole number of troops and recruits sent to the new establishment was 11,976, of whom 790 failed to join. For the old establishment from May 1, 1846, to July 5, 1848, 21,018 men were enlisted. For the new establishment during the same period the number was 13,991. Total 35,009.

Volunteers.

General staff	272
Mustered for three months (militia)	1, 390
Mustered for six months, but held only for three	11, 211
Mustered for twelve months	27, 063
Mustered for the war	33, 596
Total	73, 260
Total staff and volunteers	73, 532

Resolving the volunteer force of 73,260 into the different arms of service, it consisted of—

Cavalry or mounted troops	16, 887
Artillery	1, 129
Infantry	55, 244

Resolving it into officers and men, it consisted of—

Officers	3, 131
Noncommissioned officers and privates	70, 129

In this mass of men, who were totally inexperienced at the beginning of their service, there was a leaven of between thirty and forty officers who were in, or had been in, the Regular Army. The total force employed during the war, including 31,024 regulars and marines, was 104,284.

The actual number mustered in, exclusive of the army of occupation (3,554) and 548 marines, was 100,454.

From these figures it will be perceived that the regular troops, 31,024, exceeded more than six times the number of regulars and volunteers with whom Taylor at Buena Vista defeated the entire Mexican army; while, omitting the three and six months' men and adding 31,024 to the 60,659 volunteers for twelve months and the war, the aggregate, 91,683 regulars and volunteers, was nine times as great as the effective strength of the army with which Scott fought the decisive battles around the City of Mexico.

CASUALTIES.

The casualties among the different classes of troops were as follows:

OLD ESTABLISHMENT (19,290).

Discharged:		
Expiration of service	1,561	
Disability	1,782	
By order and civil authority	373	
	<hr/>	3,716
		<hr/>
Killed in battle:		
Officers	41	
Men	422	
	<hr/>	463
Died of wounds:		
Officers	22	
Men	307	
	<hr/>	329
Wounded:		
Officers	118	
Men	1,685	
	<hr/>	1,803
Total wounded, killed, and died of wounds.		<hr/> 2,595
Deaths (disease and accidents):		
Officers	117	
Men	3,437	
	<hr/>	3,554
Resignations		37
Desertions		2,247

NEW ESTABLISHMENT (11,186).

Discharged:		
Expiration of service	12	
Disability	767	
By order and civil authority	114	
	<hr/>	893
Killed in battle:		
Officers	5	
Men	62	
	<hr/>	67
Died of wounds:		
Officers	5	
Men	71	
	<hr/>	76
Deaths (disease and accidents):		
Officers	46	
Men	2,218	
	<hr/>	2,264
Wounded:		
Officers	36	
Men	236	
	<hr/>	272
Total wounded, killed, and died of wounds		415
Total killed, wounded, and died of wounds, Regular Army		2,946
Resignations		92
Desertions		602

MARINES.

Killed and died of wounds	9
Deaths (disease, etc.)	3
	<hr/>
Total	12

VOLUNTEERS (73,260).

Discharged:	
Disability.....	7, 200
Other causes.....	1, 697
Killed in battle and died of wounds.....	607
Killed and wounded ^a	1, 831
Deaths from disease and accident.....	6, 408
Resignations.....	279
Desertions.....	3, 876

The number killed, wounded, and died of wounds, in the three classes of troops was as follows:

Regulars (19,290), old establishment.....	2, 595
Regulars (11,186), new establishment.....	415
Volunteers (73,260).....	^a 1, 831

The losses in killed and died of wounds among the volunteers were distributed as follows:

Three and six months' men (12,601).....	16
Twelve months' men (27,063).....	439
Volunteers for the war (33,596).....	152
Total ^b	607

The deaths from disease and accidents were as follows:

Three and six months' men.....	129
Twelve months' men.....	1, 859
Volunteers for the war.....	4, 420
Total ^c	6, 408

Of the 16 killed or died of wounds among the three and six months' men (all held for three months), 15 belonged to the Texas rangers, two companies of whom were organized by General Taylor before leaving Corpus Christi, and who were with him in the skirmishes preceding Palo Alto.

This loss of but one man among the remaining 12,000, who were called out too late to participate in the battle of Palo Alto and for too short a period to be available for operations beyond the Rio Grande, indicates how useless was their service.

The same remark applies with almost equal force to the 33,000 volunteers for the war, called out to replace the 27,000 men who had had the benefit of a year's campaign and instruction. An analysis of their losses shows that of the 152 killed and died of wounds, 118 fell upon the four regiments (the Second New York, First and Second Pennsylvania, and First South Carolina), which were with Scott's army at Cerro Gordo and remained with it till the hour of its triumph. Thus it appears that, excepting the Texas rangers from the three and six

^a The killed and wounded in the entire force of volunteers is taken from the Statistical Report of the Surgeon-General, Ex. Doc. No. 96, Senate, Thirty-fourth Congress, first session, p. 621. This number is taken in preference to 1,778, computed from Ex. Doc. No. 24, H. R., Thirty-first Congress, first session; both are based on figures of the Adjutant-General, compiled from the reports of commanders and regimental and company returns. As stated by the Adjutant-General, "The statistics of the war are given as close approximation only."

^b House Ex. Doc. No. 24, Thirty-first Congress, first session, pp. 23, 24, 25, 26, Table C.

^c House Ex. Doc. No. 24, Thirty-first Congress, first session, pp. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 Table C.

months' men and the four gallant regiments which entered the Mexican capital from the volunteers called out for the war, the total loss among more than 42,000 men was but 35 killed and died of their wounds.

If we choose to carry the argument further and add to the 42,000 the 11,000 new regulars who were likewise called out to repair the mistake of twelve-month enlistments, it will appear that we had more than 53,000 men in the service, whose losses in killed and died of wounds numbered but 178.^a Laying aside the President's responsibility for this result, it is important to observe that 12,000 of these men (militia) were called out because our defective laws gave the President no power to increase the rank and file of the Army, while 41,000 were called out to remedy another legislative blunder which permitted him to accept volunteers for twelve months instead of for the war.

To establish the fact that these 41,000 men, regulars and volunteers, need not have been summoned to the field except to retrieve errors of statesmanship, self-evident to the military mind, we have only to state that the old army recruited to 19,000, added to the 27,000 volunteers, had the latter been accepted for the war, would have given the Government a permanent force of 46,000 men. Contrasted with this number the greatest strength of the Mexican army was never estimated to exceed 36,000 men. As these conclusions bear solely on the extravagance of our system, it is possible that they may be lightly considered under the popular conviction that in time of peace our economy more than offsets the prodigality of war, but there are other considerations of deeper import than dollars and cents. In a government of the people and for the people, more than in any other, it is the duty of statesmen to study the means of preserving life as well as property, yet history shows that in proportion as the national treasure has been squandered, have the lives of our brave and patriotic citizen soldiers been thrown away.

As an evidence of the penalty paid for entrusting raw troops to inexperienced officers who knew nothing of the principles governing their diet and health, let us again recur to statistics, taking, for example, the deaths by disease in the old and new regular regiments. A comparison of these figures shows that while the old army, numbering from first to last 19,290, was exposed for more than two years to a sickly climate and lost 2,574 enlisted men, or at the rate of $6\frac{3}{4}$ per cent per annum, the new establishment, numbering but 11,186, lost in less than a year 2,055, or at the rate of 19 per cent per annum—a loss three times as great as the old regiments.

That this loss might have been much lessened had their field officers been selected from the old regiments, scarcely admits of denial. Other figures may be quoted which should not escape the attention of the philanthropist. If it be admitted that but for the unfortunate option granted by the law, the 27,000 volunteers first called out, in connection with the old regular establishment, would have been sufficient to bring the war to a speedy termination, then it must also be granted

^a At the battle of Salem Heights or Chancellorsville the One hundred and twenty-first New York Volunteers, after six months' training under a regular officer, went into action with 8 companies, numbering 458 men, and lost 228 killed and wounded, of whom 92 were killed and died of their wounds. This loss of part of a regiment in a single battle exceeded one-half of the loss of 53,000 men who served in the Mexican war.

that the men who died of disease in the new regular regiments and among the 33,000 volunteers afterwards called out for the war, were the victims of unwise legislation.

This number was as follows:

New regular regiments:	
Officers.....	36
Men.....	2, 055
Volunteers for the war:	
Officers and men.....	4, 309
By accident in both classes.....	141
Total.....	6, 541

In addition the number of men discharged (in ruined health) for disability was:

New regular regiments.....	767
Volunteers for the war.....	2, 763
Total.....	3, 530

In paying a just tribute to the patriots who forsook their homes to go to a distant land, there to face the ravages of death in defense of the honor of the country, President Polk in his message to Congress, December, 1846, stated:

Well may the American people be proud of the energy and gallantry of our regular and volunteer officers and soldiers. The events of these few months afford a gratifying proof that our country can, under any emergency, confidently rely for the maintenance of her honor and the defense of her rights on an effective force ready at all times voluntarily to relinquish the comforts of home for the perils and privations of the camp. And though such a force may be for the time expensive it is in the end economical, as the ability to command it removes the necessity of employing a large standing army in time of peace and proves that our people love their institutions and are ever ready to defend and protect them.^a

The views expressed in these lines undoubtedly represent the average conviction of our people if not of our statesmen. Firmly convinced that in reducing the strength of the Regular Army without making any provision for its expansion, our system "is in the end economical," our representatives have suffered military organization to be neglected till in a moment of excitement, laws have been enacted, without debate, a single defect of which, like the short enlistment clause of the act of May, 1846, may entail the sacrifice of more than 6,000 men.

COST OF THE WAR.

The money disbursed by the pay department to the various classes of troops during the Mexican war was as follows:

Permanent regular troops.....	\$2, 800, 000
Additional regular troops.....	2, 294, 427
Volunteers.....	10, 083, 016
Total ^b	15, 177, 443

The mere pay of troops is, however, but a small portion of the expense of carrying on war, as is shown by the following table, which

^aHouse Ex. Doc. No. 4, Twenty-ninth Congress, second session, p. 22.

^bFigures furnished by Pay Department.

gives the expenditures of the War and Navy departments from the close of the Florida war to the year 1849:

	War.	Navy.
1843 ^a	\$2,908,671.95	\$3,727,711.53
1844.....	5,218,183.66	6,498,139.11
1845.....	5,746,291.28	6,297,177.89
	13,873,146.89	16,523,088.53
1846.....	10,413,370.58	6,455,013.92
1847.....	35,840,030.33	7,900,635.76
1848.....	27,688,334.21	9,408,476.02
1849.....	14,558,473.26	9,786,705.92
	88,500,208.38	33,550,831.62

^a For the half year from January 1, 1843, to June 30, 1843.

These figures show that while by reducing the Army to 8,000 men the expenditures during the two and a half years preceding the war were but \$13,873,146.89, or at the rate of \$5,549,258.75 per annum, the expenditures for the next four years were \$88,500,208.38, or at the rate of \$17,700,041.67 per annum.

LESSONS OF THE WAR.

Notwithstanding its unnecessary prolongation the Mexican war marked a great change if not a revolution in our military policy. This result was due to the decay and gradual abandonment of the militia system which up to that time had been regarded as the "great bulwark of national defense." Bearing in mind that the laws under which military operations were prosecuted were almost identical with the laws of 1812 let us examine the composition of the forces employed in the two wars:

	War of 1812.	War with Mexico.
Regulars.....	^a 50,000	31,624
Militia.....	458,463	12,601
Volunteers and rangers.....	13,159	^b 60,659
Total.....	521,622	104,284

^a This figure is approximate. The return for September, 1814, gave the aggregate strength of the Army at 38,186. The report of the Commissioner of Pensions for 1874, p. 30, gives the number of men, including sailors and marines, who served twelve months or more, at 63,179. From this estimate there should still be deducted twelve months' rangers and volunteers.

^b In the Mexican war it will be remembered that 11,211 men were mustered in for six months, but held only for three, the legal term of the militia. In reality these men, as also in all probability the 1,390, should be considered volunteers rather than militia, inasmuch as militia service was no longer obligatory in any of the States.

The percentage of the different classes of troops to the total number of men employed in the two wars was as follows:

	War of 1812.	Mexican war.
Total force.....	521,622	104,284
Regulars.....per cent..	10	30
Militia.....do.....	88	12
Volunteers and rangers.....do.....	2	58

A comparison of these figures shows that while in the War of 1812 the combined force of regulars and volunteers of twelve or more months' service was but 12 per cent of the total number of troops employed, the same force in the Mexican war was no less than 88 per cent. The contrast does not stop here. In the first war, relying upon the States instead of appealing directly to the people as intended by the Constitution, Congress became a witness of disasters like those which occurred in the Revolution; in the second, the national troops, organized and supported by Congress, achieved a series of victories unmarred by a single defeat.

In one war, an army of more than 6,000 raw troops, posted in the defense of our own capital, fled with a loss of but 19 killed and wounded; in the other a force of less than 5,000 trained volunteers, supported by a few regular troops, overthrew a Mexican army of four times its number.

In one war, an enemy numbering less than 5,000 men baffled all of our efforts at invasion; in the other our army, with less than 6,000 combatants, entered in triumph the enemy's capital.

But the difference between the results of the two wars is not wholly to be ascribed to the substitution of national volunteers for the militia. In the war of 1812 the Regular Army, which had itself to be created, was unable to furnish a standard of skill and discipline. In the Mexican war, aside from sustaining the principal losses in killed and wounded, it furnished able commanders, and in every field set an example of skill, fortitude, and courage.

As to the influence of military education in producing such diversity of results, General Scott, who, in 1814, was compelled to teach the regular officers of his brigade the elements of squad drill, left his views to the Senate in the memorable words:

I give it as my fixed opinion that but for our graduated cadets the war between the United States and Mexico might, and probably would, have lasted some four or five years, with, in its first half, more defeats than victories falling to our share; whereas in less than two campaigns we conquered a great country and a peace without the loss of a single battle or skirmish.^a

^aCullum's Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy, preface, vol. 1, p. 11.





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